

Today's News - Monday, November 30, 2009

- ArcSpace brings us "Donald Judd: Furniture" in NYC, and two tomes by Goldberger.
- Is there a future for giant public works projects?
- Hawthorne wonders "what happens when high-profile building projects stumble forward without the big-name architects that helped them gain attention."
- Orange County Great Park not exactly stumbling forward, just taking smaller steps.
- The head of Israel's Union of United Architects says not all West Bank building is political.
- It seems to be a politics of fear that has banned minarets on mosques in Switzerland, "denting the nation's image as a bastion of tolerance."
- On a brighter note, Hume cheers the demise of "Toronto the Timid": the city "has started to think big, take architectural risks" (but will it maintain the momentum?).
- Alsop has a few doubts about that: "Torontonians are good at just saying no" (that should endear him).
- Vietnamese architects blame poor management by municipal authorities - and architects' lack of training - for Ho Chi Minh City's "lack of character."
- Bernstein visits Pitt's "gifts to New Orleans" and finds brightly colored, modernist houses that make a big impression (good and bad, depending on who he talked to).
- Baillieu warns that the "belief that the construction industry can bring about a 50% cut in CO2 emissions could lead to dangerous complacency."
- India cheers "an almost unknown building" winning a WAF award for being green (without fancy mechanics).
- Clemson's new green science building "is for the birds, but in a good way."
- Birmingham's big building plans move ahead with approval of Mecanoo's library design and FOA's New Street Station plans (submitted for planning, anyway).
- FLW's Pennsylvania synagogue seeks more recognition - and will probably find it.
- Karlsberger seeks \$32 million from OSU for breach of contract (a gutsy move).
- Survey shows pain of recession for artists, though "musicians and architects tend to do better than writers and painters."
- Design Miami is proving effective as a force for change in the city's Design District.
- Architectural photographer Robert Lautman, 85, will be remembered at the National Building Museum this Friday (his sense of humor was legendary - "among the vocations listed on his business card was 'Lunch'").

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-- Exhibition: "Donald Judd: Furniture," Sebastian + Barquet, New York, NY
-- Books: "Building Up and Tearing Down: Reflections on the Age of Architecture" and "Why Architecture Matters" by Paul Goldberger

Entering the Superproject Void: With the Erie Canal and even the Big Dig behind us, the future of giant public works projects is uncertain...If their absence creates a void, particularly in a recession, what can fill it? - New York Times

UC Berkeley, Toyo Ito and the architecture of lowered expectations: ...episode raises questions ...about what happens when high-profile building projects...stumble forward without the big-name architects that helped them gain attention...Shorn of momentum or their architectural headliners -- or both -- where do these projects go? By Christopher Hawthorne -- Mario Ciampi (1970); Frank Gehry; Ken Smith; Enrique Norten [images, links]- Los Angeles Times

Great Expectations: Construction moves ahead for Orange County Great Park..."do you build a smaller area to full detail and amenity, or do you try to stretch the money out over a large area with less detail?"...designers opted for a compromise targeting 200 acres, fewer than initially planned, but with more robust amenities. -- Ken Smith; Mia Lehrer; Enrique Norten/TEN Arquitectos [images, links]- The Architect's Newspaper

Location, location, location: Anda Barr, head of Israel's Union of United Architects, says not all West Bank building is political. - Jerusalem Post

Swiss Ban Building of Minarets on Mosques: Switzerland's political right scored a surprising win, denting the nation's image as a bastion of tolerance. - New York Times

City's new architecture frees Toronto the Timid: Who knew? Toronto isn't afraid to colour outside the lines, taking risks that have energized the city...has started to think big, take architectural risks...The hard part will be to maintain the momentum through the economic downturn... By Christopher Hume -- Gehry; Libeskind; MAD; KPF/Sweeny Sterling Finlayson; Will Alsop; Siamak Hariri; West 8; Montgomery Sisam; KPMG/Goldsmith Borgalis - Toronto Star

Will Alsop on coloured blobs, tilted stilts and ditching the 'master plan': Famed for his OCAD 'Tabletop', he will soon be leaving his mark on more of Toronto..."Too much democracy can prevent things happening. I'd prefer people to be proactive, and I'm not sure that Torontonians are good at that - they're good at just saying no." - National Post (Canada)

City architecture lacks character: ...Ho Chi Minh City...somewhat chaotic...Experts attributed the city's unattractive architectural façade and character to poor management by municipal authorities...Architects must share responsibility...for the unseemly architectural structures...their professional skills were still low because of poor training. Vietnamese architects were yet to promote originality and creativity... -- Vu Dai Hai; Ho Le Phuong; Nguyen Van Tat- Viet Nam News

Brad Pitt's Gifts to New Orleans: Four years after the Lower Ninth Ward was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, [Make It Right] builds brightly colored, modernist houses for residents...plans to build 150 homes...So far, just 15 of them are occupied, but those 15 make a big impression...seem better suited to an exhibition of avant-garde architecture than to a neighborhood struggling to recover... By Fred A. Bernstein -- Mayne/Morphosis; GRAFT; Shigeru Ban; KieranTimberlake; Andrew Kitchens/Matthew Berman/Workshop/APD- New York Times

No easy route to cutting CO2: The belief that the construction industry can bring about a 50% cut in CO2 emissions could lead to dangerous complacency...architects are drowning under the weight of 70 national and 96 regional bodies offering advice, grants and finger-wagging. Finally, there is the elephant in the room — refurbishment. For architects this is grinding, often unrewarding, work...but is, arguably, greener. By Amanda Baillieu- BD/Building Design (UK)

City building bags global green award: India stood tall at the World Architecture Festival (WAF) awards...with an almost unknown building winning an award for being green...The Pearl Academy of Fashion in Jaipur was voted the Best Learning Building of the year... -- Manit Rastogi/Morphogenesis- Times of India

Clemson builds green: New science building is for the birds, but in a good way: The design of the new Coastal Ecology and Forest Science building at Hobcaw Barony wildlife refuge was driven...was shaped by a host of environmental considerations...And then there were the red-cockaded woodpeckers. By Robert Behre -- LS3P Associates [images]- Charleston Post and Courier (South Carolina)

Birmingham Council approves Mecanoo library: ...The news comes hot on the heels of the government's announcement that it will not to list the original 1970s brutalist library. [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Birmingham New Street Station plans submitted for planning: ...overwhelming positive response showing 91 per cent of respondents agreeing that the design was an improvement on the current station. -- Foreign Office Architects (FOA); WS Atkins; Mace [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Frank Lloyd Wright synagogue seeks more recognition: ...members of Beth Shalom [Elkins Park, PA]...are stepping forward to tell the story of how their landmark spiritual home was built...synagogue marks its 50th anniversary this year by establishing a visitors center that will be open three days a week. Previously, appointments were required... -- Paul Goldberger (AP) [images]- USA Today

Architecture firm seeks \$32 million from Ohio State University for breach of contract: ...contends that...many of the discussions that led OSU to terminate its contract occurred "in nonpublic secretly scheduled meetings..." -- Karlsberger Architecture; Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK)- The Lantern

A Survey Shows Pain of Recession for Artists: ...More than 5,300 practitioners in fields like painting, filmmaking and architecture participated in the online survey...musicians and architects tend to do better than writers and painters... -- Leveraging Investments in Creativity- New York Times

When culture meets commerce: ...Design Miami could be considered the younger sibling of Art Basel Miami Beach...is proving equally effective as a force for change in an area now known as Miami Design District..."Design has been the real impetus for the changes"... -- Craig Robins/Dacra; Zaha Hadid; Marc Newson; Fernando and Humberto Campana; Maarten Baas/Baas & den Herder- Financial Times

Remembering Robert Lautman, 85, Architectural Photographer: His mastery of composition, light, and shadow made him the photographer of choice...his hospitality and sense of humor were legendary. Among the vocations listed on his business card was "Lunch"...His life and work will be remembered [at] the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, December 4. [slide show]- Architectural Record

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